

forget its hierarchical character, and go forth like the Twelve without gold or silver or scrip if it is to get hold of the men after this war.

I often think that it was an immense mistake ever to give the chaplains commissioned rank, for it is a case of rendering unto Cæsar the things which are not Cæsar's. It puts a gulf between the chaplain and the soldier which is never bridged and it is altogether anomalous, for a chaplain has no disciplinary authority. He is with the men but not of them. The regimental officer who lives, works, and fights with his men may, and if he is the right sort he does, get to know them, although even then the men never talk with quite the same freedom as they do among themselves. But this communion is denied to the padre. I have, indeed, met chaplains in the fire-trenches and have known of one or two who, in defiance of orders, went over the top. Their willingness to take risks is not in dispute, but that is not the point. The point is that they are only spectators and privileged spectators at that. If the clergy had been allowed to join up and to forget their sacerdotal character in the ranks, they might have achieved great things. There are some 20,000 priests in the ranks of the French Army as soldiers. I am not arguing for the application of conscription to the clergy, and I daresay its application in France was anything but disinterested—it was, I believe, a political move of the anti-clerical, but it has operated to strengthen the Church instead of weakening it, for the anti-clerical forget that in